

**To:** Higuchi, Dean[Higuchi.Dean@epa.gov]  
**From:** Calvino, Maria Soledad  
**Sent:** Wed 8/12/2015 11:40:09 PM  
**Subject:** RE: More good background on mine clean up

Hi Dean,

Here is the latest draft. Let me know what you think and I can show it to Bill.

Thanks!

**From:** Higuchi, Dean  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 4:16 PM  
**To:** Calvino, Maria Soledad  
**Subject:** More good background on mine clean up

From the story: <http://www.livescience.com/51831-colorado-mine-spill-cleanup.html>

The Gold King Mine is one of an estimated 23,000 abandoned mines dotting the state of Colorado. Prospectors and mining companies dug gold-bearing ore and other precious metals out of the ground in the state for decades, but they had little responsibility for cleaning up after the mines closed. It wasn't until the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act passed in 1977 that mining operators had to create a plan for cleaning up defunct mines.

That act established funding for states to clean up long-abandoned mines, like the Gold King (which closed in the 1920s). But funds, drawn from taxes on coal-mining companies, are limited. The Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining & Safety gets about \$2 million a year, and that amount has allowed the closing of 6,127 abandoned mine shafts in the state since 1980. But that state agency has almost no money for environmental remediation beyond simply closing entrances and preventing mine collapse. There have been previous efforts to turn the area around the Gold King Mine into a Superfund site, which would fast-track funds for the containment of any toxic waste. But local opposition sunk those plans. [[8 of the World's Most Endangered Places](#)]

Thanks!

Dean Higuchi

Press Officer/Congressional Liaison/Public Affairs

US EPA, Region 9, Hawaii Office

[higuchi.dean@epa.gov](mailto:higuchi.dean@epa.gov)

808-541-2711